

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NICOSI 03979 161304Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L NICOSIA 3979

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, CY
SUBJECT: BRITISH MINISTER'S VISIT TO CYPRUS

1. ON DEC 9 AND 10, UK MINISTER OF STATE DAVID OWEN VISITED CYPRUS ON A SHORT, FACT-FINDING MISSION. HE VISITED THE BRITISH-OWNED GOLDEN SANDS HOTEL IN VAROSHA, CALLED ON PRESIDENT MAKARIOS AND "TFSC PRESIDENT" DENKTASH AND HAD DINNER WITH A GROUP OF GREEK CYPRIOT POLITICAL LEADERS.

2. ACCORDING TO HICOM OFFICER THE VISIT TO VAROSHA WAS INTERESTING IN THAT IT DID NOT REVEAL A GREAT DEAL OF DAMAGE TO THE OUTSIDE OF BUILDINGS. THE GROUP PROCEEDED DOWN KENNEDY AVENUE TO THE GOLDEN SANDS. THE TURKISH AUTHORITIES HAD CLEANED THE ROAD AND SIDEWALKS ON THE
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PAGE 02 NICOSI 03979 161304Z

ROUTE ALTHOUGH IT WAS POSSIBLE TO SEE HEAVY GROWTH OF WEEDS ON SIDE STREETS. THE HOTEL ITSELF APPEARED TO BE IN SATISFACTORY CONDITION. MUCH OF THE EQUIPMENT OF THE HOTEL, INCLUDING SOME SPEEDBOATS, WAS STACKED IN THE LOBBY AND OTHER MAIN RECEPTION ROOMS. MOST SIGNIFICANT ASPECT OF VISIT WAS THAT IT WAS THE FIRST TIME HICOM

OFFICIALS HAVE ACHIEVED ACCESS TO VAROSHA IN THE PAST YEAR AND A HALF. CONSENSUS IS THAT DETERIORATION IS NOT AS GREAT AS SOME REPORTS INDICATE, BUT IT WOULD TAKE A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF TIME AND LARGE EXPENDITURE TO PUT THE INFRA-STRUCTURE OF THE CITY BACK INTO SHAPE TO SUPPORT ANY REPOPULATION.

3. HIGHLIGHT OF CONVERSATION WITH MAKARIOS WAS HIS STATEMENT THAT AN ACCEPTABLE BI-REGIONAL SOLUTION WOULD REQUIRE TURKS TO CONTROL SOMETHING "LESS THAN THIRTY PERCENT" OF THE ISLAND. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN HICOM MEMORY--OR IN OURS-- THAT MAKARIOS HAS EVER HINTED HE COULD ACCEPT TURKISH CONTROL OVER ANYTHING MORE THAN TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT OF THE ISLAND. THE OTHER SIGNIFICANT POINT MADE BY MAKARIOS WAS THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE AN INITIATIVE ON CYPRUS BY THE US AND EC-9 ("THE TEN", ACCORDING TO HICOM OFFICER) SOMETIME BEFORE THE TURKISH ELECTION CAMPAIGN BECOMES TOO HEATED TO BAR ANY PROGRESS. MAKARIOS THOUGHT THAT SOMETHING LIKE THE PRINCIPLES ENUNCIATED BY SECRETARY KISSINGER IN THE UNGA MIGHT FORM A BASIS FOR THE INITIATIVE, BUT HE BELIEVED THE PRINCIPLES SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY SPECIFIC PROPOSALS ON OUTSTANDING ISSUES. THE PROPOSALS, HE THOUGHT, SHOULD BE FORMULATED BY "THE TEN." HE WAS NOT SANGUINE THAT ANY INITIATIVE WOULD HAVE GREAT EFFECT, BUT STILL THOUGHT IT SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN.

4. MEETING WITH DENKTASH REVEALED NO CHANGE IN ESTABLISHED TURKISH CYPRIOT POSITIONS.

5. OTHER HIGHLIGHT OF VISIT WAS ANTI-TURKISH MONOLOGUE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 NICOSI 03979 161304Z

BY GREEK NEGOTIATOR PAPADOPOULOS AT DINNER, WHICH CONVINCED OWEN AND OTHER BRITISH PRESENT THAT ANY NEGOTIATIONS CONDUCTED BY HIM WOULD NOT BE SUCCESSFUL.

6. OWEN VISIT RECEIVED MODERATE PRESS COVERAGE IN BOTH PARTS OF CYPRUS. VISIT PROVIDED OPPORTUNITY FOR GREEK CYPRIOT PRESS TO COMPLAIN ABOUT BRITISH POLICY ON CYPRUS, BUT THIS WAS A RECITAL OF OLD ACCUSATIONS AND DIED OUT AFTER ONE DAY.
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